

Call to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:	Alex Bennett Lusi Fang Cindy Stewart Brian Wehrung	Jerry Bixby Penny Marinos Kent Voigt
Absent:	Michael Farrug Richard Hughes	

Kyleen Krstich, the Committee's first high school student representative from Troy High, was acknowledged for her contribution and service to the Committee.

Approval of Minutes

It was agreed to indicate in the minutes the effective month and year of the Comcast rate increase.

Further, it was agreed to change the first sentence in the paragraph following the Comcast rate increase table to read: "It was suggested that Comcast is not giving customers enough time between the receipt of their billing statements and the due dates, especially since late fees increased from \$3.00 to \$5.00."

Under Old Business, Staffing Issues, it was agreed to change the first sentence to read: "The Board suggested that Troy could be doing more to offer community cable programs like Rochester, Shelby Township and Sterling Heights." Additionally, the Board agreed to change the last sentence to read: "Additional staffing may be needed to increase programming."

Moved by Voigt, seconded by Marinos, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 17, 2001, as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

Introduction

Floyd Armstead, Vice President for WideOpenWest Technical Operations, was introduced to the Committee. Mr. Armstead has been in the cable business for 15 years and is looking forward to enhancing what Ameritech began in the cable industry.

Questions – Internet

Mr. Armstead said that WideOpenWest plans to launch a high-speed data Internet service that is scheduled for implementation in the Troy community within the 1st quarter. Troy will be one of the first rollout cities because the main head end facility is located in Troy. The company does not want to rush into the market, hoping to better serve their customers. A high-speed data Internet has been implemented in Naperville, Ohio.

Will you have to use existing cables or new cables?

Response: Existing cables can be used for all WideOpenWest customers; otherwise separate cables are needed. It is their intent to complete cable installation on friendly grounds.

Will you have a promotion upon introduction of product and/or package pricing?

Response: This is a consideration but no specifics have been disclosed.

Does every home have a tap?

Response: Yes, in Troy, except for certain predominately industrial/commercial areas. The addresses in these areas will be checked. Residential is completely set up.

Can you meet demand?

Response: This is the company's biggest demand based on unknowns. People either love the product and are dissatisfied with the current product, or are satisfied with dial-up modems.

Do you hope your product will be superior to what's on the market?

Response: The product will be our own, not a second party product.

Will you allow for multiple addresses per home?

Response: Currently, the company is thinking about offering 3 IP addresses to the user.

Will you support news groups? @Home is taking this away.

Response: It is believed so.

Will you be offering more enhanced cable services?

Response: Yes, and on the digital side soon. There are other developments in the works. MSNBC and SpeedVision (January 16, 2002) have just been launched. Sundance has been shifted to the digital tier. Analog Pay Per View may not be offered, but more basic channels will be added. In the digital tier, HBO and Showtime are offered.

Is there a reduction in the bill since removing Sundance or the addition of a new channel?

Response: There are no adjustments to any rates as a result of these changes.

Will commercial free music be provided?

Response: Commercial free music is part of the basic digital package. A receiver can be run through the television for optimum sound. Showtime channel (digital) has no control over volume.

Is there a means of recording audio on disc to play on a computer?

Response: This will be looked into.

Does WideOpenWest have means to support HDTV (High Definition TV)?

Response: Mr. Armstead is not sure if any industry as a whole knows in which direction HDTV is going. WideOpenWest will be digital service and there may be a need for a digital HDTV receiver, but possibly not on a wide-scale demand. Four years is a long time in “cable years” and it is difficult to plan because technology is constantly changing. There are many variables to HDTV; i.e., will a customer be willing to pay more for HDTV?

Will you have a local office? Ameritech would deliver products within a certain time.

Response: Multiple locations are being considered. One is Madison Heights at 14 Mile and Dequindre. Four areas are being considered where customers can pay bills, exchange remotes or converter boxes. Head end facilities are on Rochester Road, north of 14 Mile, and on Stephenson Highway in the old Ameritech facility. Staffing will be maintained at approximately 100, 60% to 40% permanent/contractors. WideOpenWest has retained some great Ameritech employees.

Chairman Wehrung stated that Ameritech has been a very good supplier to Troy and would be a tough act to follow.

Mr. Armstead replied that WideOpenWest would hopefully get better. The company has good employees and a good knowledge of the product.

Mr. Armstead can be contacted at farmstead@wideopenwest.com.

Correspondence

A. Status of Sale of ANM's Cable System To WideOpenWest

The sale is complete as of November 30, 2001.

B. Ameritech New Media – Quarterly Report

Discussion was held with respect to quarterly reports and grading WideOpenWest services, similar to the grading system for Ameritech services. Ms. Stewart will request quarterly reports from each provider and the items will be placed on the next agenda under Old Business.

What is definition of abandonment and voluntary disconnects?

C. Comcast – PEG Support Fee

Unbundling and reclassifying.

D. Comcast – Channel Lineup Changes

The channel lineup seems to be operating consistently as in past years. There was no notice and changes occur after midnight. The new lineup should have been mailed.

New channels have been added and other channels were removed. The Comcast letter states “may” include addition of ... which raises curiosity. Some channels were moved from digital to basic, and many channel problems were straightened out so as to be more competitive. Overall, Comcast service is very good – good quality and low outage.

E. [Comcast@Home](#) Service Disruptions/Complaints

Cities have no control over Internet service. Troy and surrounding cities in the Royal Oak system will be converted on January 28, 2002.

Comcast and ICCA will address the issue of cable complaints at a special meeting scheduled for March 13. The next step is a default process. The Committee will not take action, if necessary, until after this special meeting. We want to provide Comcast time to respond prior to resorting to default.

Related to the October 17 minutes, find out the time between receipt of billing statement and due date. When does the bill get debited? What is the grace period?

F. Sale of Ameritech New Media to WideOpenWest

The Committee spoke with Floyd Armstead regarding WideOpenWest.

G. AT&T Broadband to Merge with Comcast

The combined assets are \$72 billion. The new company – AT&T Comcast Corp – will be one of the leading and most powerful communications and entertainment companies in the world. It will have approximately 22 million subscribers and revenue of approximately \$19 billion.

Old Business

A. Digital Equipment (removed from agenda)

B. Americast Transfer to WideOpenWest

The transfer is complete.

C. CATV Mission Statement

Chairman Wehrung suggested that the date be revised and ANM be changed to WideOpenWest. Any additional changes can be considered at future meetings.

The issue of looking into additional ways to promote cable schedule and programs should be addressed at the next meeting. Information from Chairman Wehrung will be included in the next packet.

New Business

A. ICCA Meeting Notes

There was a brief discussion related to CMN and PEG monies from the original franchise agreement.

B. Presentation to Kyleen Krstich – Student Representative

Ms. Krstich was commended for her service on the Committee as well as her work on “Spotlight on Troy” and City of Troy PSA voiceovers.

C. Related Publications and Member List

This information is available on-line, free of charge. Alex notes the best magazine is *Television Broadcast*. The Committee Member list is correct with one exception: Mr. Bennett’s e-mail address is Vulkan47@aol.com.

Chairman Wehrung will contact Michael Farrug since he has missed the last four meetings.

Related News Articles

Comcast subscribers are getting new e-mail addresses. A smooth transition is expected; it will be the same name at Comcast.net. Troy customers will be converted on January 2, 2002.

A *Free Press* article from December 21, 2001, "Merger to Create Cable Grant" states the combined AT&T Comcast network has another target: Offering local telephone service through cable. A *Free Press* article from January 3, 2002, "Lack of Choices Adds to Comcast Mess" states: "The Michigan Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities, has been getting complaints about the changeover. But because it has no jurisdiction over cable TV companies, the complaints do little good."

A *Free Press* article dated January 16, 2002 will be included in the next packet.

Staff Report

Council approved the purchase of a cable truck at their January meeting.

Upon approval of a part-time cable position, Rebecca Andrus was hired. Ms. Andrus started in January 2002. Her prior experience has been with the Rochester/Avondale Schools.

Moved by Bixby, seconded by Bennett, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.